**The State Board of Education’s**

**Revised Graduation Requirements**

To thrive in today’s complex, globally-competitive economy, young people must acquire skills and knowledge beyond the traditional core subjects. They need to think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, work in diverse teams, and apply what they have learned to unfamiliar tasks. They also need to develop a deep understanding of the shared heritage and values that bind Americans and communities together. Above all, if tomorrow’s generations are to lead healthy, productive lives as full participants in a free society, they must learn to be life-long learners and active participants in their education.

Research shows that completing a challenging, rigorous, and well-rounded curriculum builds a strong foundation for future success. The courses, experiences, and activities that compose this academic bedrock are expressed as credits required for a high school diploma.

The proposed graduation requirements maintain the District of Columbia’s current 24 credits – already among the nation’s highest – and preserve the “core four” in English, mathematics, science, and social studies. These recommendations comprise a “standard diploma” (See Appendix A).

The State Board proposes revising the standard diploma, as well as additional diploma options.

**Multiple Diploma Options**

The proposed revisions are only the first step in recalibrating graduation requirements. The State Board recognizes that individual students’ educational needs are varied. In order to provide students with a more personalized pathway to graduation, the State Board is also proposing three additional diploma options. These options will provide all students with the rigor and support they need to be successful moving into college, post-secondary training, or the workforce.

***1. Diplomas of Distinction***

The State Board proposes a “Diploma of Distinction” for students who want to stretch themselves academically. In addition to completing all the graduation requirements needed to earn a Standard Diploma, students who choose to pursue a Diploma of Distinction may design a program of study, with help from an advisor or guidance counselor, which suits their needs and interests. The specifications are emboldened in the table below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Standard Diploma Requirements** | **Diploma of Distinction Requirements** |
| 4.0 units of English | 4.0 units of English |
| 4.0 units of Mathematics | 4.0 units of Mathematics |
| 4.0 units of Science | 4.0 units of Science |
| 4.0 units of Social Studies | 4.0 units of Social Studies |
| 2.0 units of World Languages | **4.0 units of World Languages (+2)** |
| 0.5 units of Visual/Performing Arts | 0.5 units of Visual/Performing Arts |
| 0.5 units of Music | 0.5 units of Music |
| 2.5 units of Electives | 2.5 units of Electives |
| 2.5 units of Health and Physical Education | 2.5 units of Health and Physical Education |
| 100 hours of Community Involvement | **150 hours of Community Involvement (+50)** |
| At least 2.0 units must be earned through courses that appear on the approved “College or Career prep” list (AP, IB, CTE, and/or dual enrollment) | **Must take at least a total of 3 AP, IB, standards-based CTE courses, or dual enrollment/college level equivalent courses in Arts, English, Math and Computer Sciences, Sciences, History and Social Studies, and/or World Languages and Cultures.****Must earn college level credit in each class, either by passing the appropriate exam in AP/IB courses or by passing the class in dual enrollment/college level equivalent courses with a C or higher.** |
| No senior project required | **Senior project or capstone required** |
| Minimum total number of units: 24.0 | **Minimum total number of units: 26.0 (+2)** |

***2. Career & Technical Education (CTE) Credential as a Supplement***

The State Board, recognizing the power of career and technical education, is also proposing a Career Credential to supplement the Standard Diploma. Awarded at graduation, the Career Credential aligns with the District’s CTE Strategic Plan and is designed to encourage students to work toward a selected industry credential or state license while pursuing a high school diploma. The Career credential would add value to a student’s transcript, provide evidence of advanced educational preparation, in addition to increased job opportunities for advancement in a chosen career path

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| **Requirements for a Career Credential** |
| 1. Meet Standard Diploma Graduation Requirements;
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| 1. Take and pass the courses prescribed within a single career cluster pathway, as delineated by the National Association of State Directors of Career and Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEc), likely encompassing between 2.0 and 4.0 units (and courses may not be used to satisfy other graduation requirements);
 |
| 1. Students should complete a practical experience related to their field; and
 |
| 1. Students may be expected to have a minimum GPA within the pathway or program.
 |
| 1. The selected pathway’s curriculum should lead to either certification in a given pathway or college-level credit.
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Additionally, if students successfully complete the Diploma of Distinction recommended in Section I, they should still be able to supplement their diploma with a Career Credential.

***3. Diploma Options for Special Education Students with Severe Cognitive Disabilities***

The State Board recognizes that students with disabilities should have the same achievement opportunities that general education students are offered. Consequently, it is recommended that all students be expected to meet standard diploma requirements, with accommodations (including additional time). However, for students with severe cognitive disabilities who are unable to meet the standard diploma requirements, the State Board proposes an **Achievement Diploma.** This option would call for an IEP team to create appropriate goals and objectives as graduation requirements.

**APPENDIX A: Recommendation of Revised Graduation Requirements**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Subject** | **Current Credits** | **Current Requirements** | **Proposed Units** | **Proposed Requirements** |
| **English** | 4.0  |  | 4.0  | Maintains proposed requirement. The content covered must align with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). |
| **Mathematics** | 4.0  | Students must complete Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, and Upper Level Math. | 4.0  | To satisfy this requirement, students must complete at least the following three (3) courses: Algebra I, geometry, Algebra II or the equivalent of these courses that are aligned to the CCSS. Students may earn credit for high school level mathematics courses taken in middle school if their rigor can be verified. Courses below the Algebra I level shall not receive high school credit. |
| **Science** | 4.0  | Students must complete Biology, two (2) lab sciences, and one (1) other science. | 4.0  | To satisfy this requirement, students must complete Biology and at least two (2) other laboratory courses, which may include physics, chemistry or engineering or other standards-based course that requires a laboratory component.Adapted from the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) a “laboratory course” may be defined as inquiry-based experience that are designed with the following elements:* Have a definite purpose that is communicated clearly to students;
* Focus on the processes of science as a way to convey content;
* Incorporate ongoing student reflection and discussion; and
* Enable students to develop safe and conscientious lab habits and procedures.
 |
| **Social Studies**  | 4.0  | Students must complete s World History I & II, DC History, US Government, US History | 4.0  | To satisfy this requirement, students must take courses in: * World history (1.0)
* United States history (1.0)
* US government/civics (0.5)
* DC history (0.5)

The remaining 1.0 unit may be selected by the student from subjects such as: African-American history, global studies, geography, economics, financial literacy, etc.  |
| **World Languages** | 2.0  |  | 2.0  | To satisfy this requirement, students must progress through two (2) units of the same language. Students may earn units for high school language courses taken in middle school, online or in directed study if their rigor can be verified. Students will be encouraged to complete two (2) consecutive years of the same world language in the graduation requirements rules. |
| **Visual/Performing Arts** | 0.5  |  | 0.5  | Maintains proposed requirement. |
| **Music** | 0.5  |  | 0.5  | Maintains proposed requirement. |
| **Electives** | 3.5  |  | 2.5  | Students must complete 2.5 elective courses. |
| **Health and Physical Education** | 1.5  |  | 2.5  | * Physical Education (1.5 units)
	+ Participation in a team sport may satisfy up to 0.5 units of the physical education requirement.
* Health Education (1.0 units)

Consistent with the Healthy Schools Act, the importance of physical activity will be emphasized in the graduation requirements rules. |
| **Community Involvement** | **100 Hours** |  | **100 Hours** | Students may engage in community service as well as community involvement activities, such as participation in a science fair, presenting at a community meeting, testifying before the State Board of Education or DC City Council.  |
| **College & Career Readiness** |  | At least 2.0 credits of the 24.0 required credits must be earned through courses that appear on the approved “College Level or Career Prep” list (AP, IB, CTE courses and college-level courses). |  | At least 2.0 units must be earned through courses that appear on the approved “College Level or Career Prep” list (AP, IB, CTE, and/or dual-enrollment college level courses). These units can be used to satisfy any of the graduation requirements. |
| **Diploma of Distinction** |  |  |  | **Under Development** |
| **Modified Diplomas** |  |  |  | **Under Development** |
| **Total** | **24.0**  |  |  |  |
| **Multi-Disciplinary Courses:**  Multidisciplinary courses may only count within one subject.**Online or Independent Courses**: Online or independent research may be used to fulfill graduation requirements. |
| **Competency:**  For all subjects, LEAs awarding credit for mastery should have in place a system by which students demonstrate mastery of required high school courses, as well as a plan to implement and continuously improve this system. The State Board of Education will identify and release targets for student learning while LEAs will be responsible for deciding appropriate competency assessment methods as well as defining sufficiency (identifying what is necessary and sufficient evidence for students to demonstrate mastery).  |